

Government of the District of Columbia

DC Department of Public Works

Testimony of  
William O. Howland, Jr.  
Director

Public Oversight Hearing  
Department of Public Works Budget Request  
for Fiscal Year 2007

Committee on Public Works and the Environment  
Carol Schwartz, Chair  
Council of the District of Columbia

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John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004



Good afternoon, Madam Chair, members of the Council, and staff. I am William O. Howland, Jr., Director of the District of Columbia Department of Public Works (DPW).

With me today are members of DPW's senior staff: Michael Carter, Deputy Director; Tom Henderson, Solid Waste Management Administrator; Teri Adams, Parking Services Administrator; Patricia Robinson, Fleet Management Administrator; James Roberts, Office of Administrative Services Administrator; Michael Belak, Chief Information Officer; and Andree Chan-Mann our Agency Fiscal Officer.

Today, we are pleased to share with you, on behalf of the Administration, an overview of DPW's proposed budget for FY 2007. Afterward, we will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

### DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS OPERATING BUDGET

DPW's primary public service-delivery divisions are the Solid Waste Management Administration and the Parking Services Administration. The men and women from these operations are responsible for keeping the city's neighborhoods and public spaces clean, safe and attractive.

Each day, they collect trash and recyclables from approximately 21,000 residences; keep clean more than 300 miles of roadways; dispose of more than 1,420 tons of trash, and provide parking enforcement for more than 20,000 regulated parking spaces.



DPW's Fleet Management Administration directly supports these operations, by ensuring the availability of the vehicles, equipment, fuel and maintenance services that we, and others in the District government, need to do our jobs.

DPW's proposed operating budget for FY 2007 is \$136,993,853 and supports 1,430 full time employees. This budget represents an 18 percent funding increase over FY 2006, with increases allotted for salary adjustments, higher fuel costs, and higher solid waste hauling and disposal costs. No new initiatives or major programs are planned.

Last month, I sat before the Committee and told you about the service gains DPW has been able to realize over the past eighteen months. The proposed FY 2007 budget permits us to solidify these gains for which we, and this Committee, Madame Chair, have worked so hard.

District residents have recognized DPW's improved service quality, including our success in keeping the city clean and reliably collecting trash and recyclables. These two services were singled out for high praise at the November 2005 Citizen Summit. It is my goal for the next summit that DPW continues to be recognized as the leader in municipal service delivery.

As I mentioned, Madam Chair, for the remainder of FY 2006 and through FY 2007, DPW plans to strengthen existing services and raise performance targets across the board. Let me draw your attention to some notable successes and new goals.

In the past calendar year, we have taken two previously out-sourced operations in-house:

- In FY 2005, DPW resumed collection of residential recyclables from 110,000 households in our service population. Results are promising; we've seen a 22 percent increase in recycling tonnage diverted from the waste stream. Our residential diversion rate is the highest it's been in recent memory.
- In FY 2006, DPW assumed responsibility for the cleaning and mowing of the National Highway System roadways located within the city limits. In just one month, we removed over 100 tons of trash and debris from major roadways such as I-295, Kenilworth Avenue and Suitland Parkway.

In 2007, we plan to consistently achieve our Clean City ratings target. Additionally, it's our goal that 85 percent of routine SWEEP enforcement requests will be resolved within five days, rather than just investigated.

Parking Services also continues to make significant gains:

- Abandoned vehicle operations, once our lowest performer, met its performance target in FY 2005. The operation now benefits from improved impoundment lot operations and full staffing.
- The newest innovation for the abandoned vehicle operation is that DPW's abandoned vehicle auction is now conducted on-line. We hope to see a smoother, higher-yield auction operation as a result. This innovation also frees our employees to continue removing abandoned vehicles from city streets and alleys, rather than staffing the monthly auction.

You will be glad to hear, Madam Chair, that parking officer turnover is down and parking ticket volume is up. Decreased attrition and increased productivity are due to the salary and grade enhancements approved by this Committee in FY 2005. The new License Plate Recognition System that you supported has also strengthened the booting operation's productivity.

Beginning this year, I have raised the bar for two of Parking Services key results measures. First, I reduced the cycle time for removing abandoned vehicles from public space. Our new service goal is to remove 85 percent of abandoned vehicles from public space within five business days rather than thirteen. I wouldn't want to live with an abandoned or dangerous vehicle on my street for more than one week. Now, no one else will have to either.

Second, you have asked us for more residential parking enforcement. While I am not able to double the percentage of RPP blocks covered daily by our parking officers, I have directed Parking Services to reduce their response time for RPP complaints from 48 hours to one day in FY 2006. In FY 2007, we aim to reduce this response time to 2 hours.

Fleet Services has made ongoing progress in its efforts to mitigate high fuel costs and lessen the environmental stress of air pollution. We have expanded our use of cleaner alternative fuels and put increased emphasis on fuel conservation. At the same time, we are working to improve our service quality.

In FY 2007, the Fleet Management operation will be held to a higher performance standard as well. We are establishing a rework measure that aims to reduce the number of repeat visits to the shop for the same problem. Additionally, the target for monthly compliance with preventive maintenance schedules will increase to 90 percent from 85 percent.

## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, Councilmember Schwartz, I want to assure you that DPW has no intention of resting on its laurels. We are not satisfied once we meet our performance goals; rather, we view that success as an opportunity to raise the bar further.

Every technological upgrade we implement, each collaboration we nurture, every system we improve and each solution we adopt ultimately translates into services that are better because they meet customer expectations, put less stress on our environmental resources, and make our city a better place to live, work and play.

Thank you for your time. We will answer any questions you may have.